

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Sarah Fuller, October 1, 1899

copied October 1, 1899. Miss Sarah Fuller, Horace Mann School, 178 Newbury Street, Boston. Dear Miss Fuller:—

What sort of a man is Mr. William E. Shaw, the deaf electrician I referred to you some time ago? He wrote to me asking information about the Mass. Ins. of Tecnology and I told him that some of your pupils had attended the Institute and if he applied to you I had no doubt you would tell him exactly what to do. I added "Anything I can do to aid you in the matter I shall be glad to do".

What do you think his reply is? He says that Prof. Cross has granted him the privilege of going to the Mass. Ins. on the condition that he pays four hundred and sixty dollars for tuition, books, board and lodging for a year's term, and adds:—

"Trusting you will kindly send me a cheque for four hundred and sixty dollars at your earliest convenience, as I go to the Tech. next Wednesday October 4th".

I think this is the coolest request I have ever received. At first I had the idea that, as a deaf mute, or at least deaf he might not have understood the English language very well, and have taken my words for more than they realy meant, but he writes English so well that I am a little doubtful whether this can be the proper explanation.

Anyway I thought I would let you know about the matter so that, if his request is due to an imprefect acquaintance with the English language, you might explain to him the usual meaning of the phrases I used, for I would not like him to suppose that I had made any promise that I was not willing to fulfil.

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On the other hand, if he understood my language properly and then had the cool assurance to ask me for four hundred and sixty dollars, I think you should know of it so as to be warned against the man.

I don't know anything about him excepting from his letter. I should be very glad to know what you think.

Yours truly, Alexander Graham Bell